

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A system for managing inventory, said system comprising:

a controller that adjusts a database of intended inventory items for a particular storage area according to food-related inventory preferences received at said controller for a particular user and according to inputs from a monitoring device that monitors the addition and removal of food-related items within said particular storage area; and

a communication medium coupled to said controller that transmits a selection of food-related items from among said database of intended inventory items that are absent from said particular storage area.

2. The system for managing inventory according to claim 1, wherein said database of intended food-related inventory items comprises a plurality of food-related items and amounts according to a base of food-related items that are always intended for storage in said particular storage area.

3. The system for managing inventory according to claim 1, wherein said database of intended food-related inventory items comprises a plurality of food-related items and amounts according to previously received food-related inventory preferences.

4. The system for managing inventory according to claim

2 1, wherein said particular storage area is located within
3 a permanent residence.

1 5. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 1, wherein said particular storage area is located within
3 a temporary residence.

1 6. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 1, wherein said particular storage area comprises a
3 climate controller.

1 7. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 6, wherein controller determines climate control for said
3 particular climate controller of said particular storage
area according to climate control preferences designated
in said food-related inventory preferences.

1 8. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 6, wherein said particular storage area comprises
3 multiple independent climate controlled sections.

1 9. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 1, wherein said food-related inventory preferences are
3 received in an extensible mark-up language data format.

1 10. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 1, wherein said food-related inventory preferences
3 received at said controller for a particular user are
4 received from a portable computer system.

1 11. The system for managing inventory according to claim
2 1, wherein said food-related inventory preferences
3 received at said controller for a particular user are
4 received from a personal storage device proffered by said

particular user.

12. The system for managing inventory according to claim 1, wherein said food-related inventory preferences received at said controller for a particular user are received via a universally accessible database according to a particular universal identifier associated with said particular user.

13. The system for managing inventory according to claim 1, wherein said controller comprises a portable computer system.

14. The system for managing inventory according to claim 1, wherein said controller comprises a universally accessible server system according to a particular universal identifier.

15. A method for managing inventory, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving food-related inventory preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a controller for a particular storage area that monitors current food-related inventory in said particular storage area;

adjusting a current database of intended food-related inventory for said particular storage area at said controller according to said food-related inventory preferences; and

determining a selection of food-related items from among said database of intended inventory items that are absent from said particular storage area, such that food-

14 related inventory that is intended for said particular
15 storage area is managed.

1 16. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said step of receiving food-related inventory
3 preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a
4 controller for a particular storage area that monitors
5 current food-related inventory in said particular storage
6 area, further comprising the step of:

7 receiving food-related inventory preferences for
8 each of said plurality of users at said controller from a
9 plurality of portable computer systems.

10 17. The method for managing inventory according to claim
11 15, said step of receiving food-related inventory
12 preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a
13 controller for a particular storage area that monitors
14 current food-related inventory in said particular storage
15 area, further comprising the step of:

16 receiving food-related inventory preferences for a
17 particular user from among said plurality of users at
18 said controller from a personal storage device proffered
19 by said particular user at said controller.

20 18. The method for managing inventory according to claim
21 15, said step of receiving food-related inventory
22 preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a
23 controller for a particular storage area that monitors
24 current food-related inventory in said particular storage
25 area, further comprising the step of:

26 receiving food-related inventory preferences for a

8 particular user from among said plurality of users at
9 said controller via a particular universally accessible
10 server system according to a particular universal
11 identifier associated with said particular user.

1 19. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said step of receiving food-related inventory
3 preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a
4 controller for a particular storage area that monitors
5 current food-related inventory in said particular storage
6 area, further comprising the step of:

receiving food-related inventory preferences in an
extensible mark-up language data format.

20. The method for managing inventory according to claim
15, said method further comprising the step of:

periodically receiving records of additions and
removals of food-related items from said particular
storage area at said controller.

1 21. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said step of adjusting a database of intended food-
3 related inventory for said particular storage area at
4 said controller according to said food-related inventory
5 preferences, further comprising the step of:

6 adding said food-related inventory preferences to a
7 base list of amounts of food-related items intended to be
8 maintained in inventory of said particular storage area.

1 22. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said step of adjusting a database of intended food-

3 related inventory for said particular storage area at
4 said controller according to said food-related inventory
5 preferences, further comprising the step of:

6 adding said food-related inventory preferences to
7 previously received food-related inventory preferences
8 for amounts of food-related items intended to be
9 maintained in inventory of said particular storage area.

1 23. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said step of adjusting a database of intended food-
3 related inventory for said particular storage area at
4 said controller according to said food-related inventory
5 preferences, further comprising the step of:

6 adjusting amounts of food-related items included in
7 said database of intended food-related inventory
8 according to additions and removal of food-related items
9 detected from said particular storage area.

1 24. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said step of adjusting a database of intended food-
3 related inventory for said particular storage area at
4 said controller according to said food-related inventory
5 preferences, further comprising the step of:

6 combining said food-related inventory preferences
7 for each of said plurality of users.

1 25. The method for managing inventory according to claim
2 15, said method further comprising the step of:

3 transmitting said selection of food-related items
4 that are absent from said particular storage area to a

store.

26. The method for managing inventory according to claim 15, said method further comprising the steps of:

receiving a request from a particular store for said selection of food-related items that are absent from said particular storage area at a universally accessible server system according to a particular universal identifier associated with said particular storage area;

enabling access to said selection of food-related items that are absent from said particular storage area if said particular store is included in a plurality of allowable requesters for said particular storage area.

27. A program for managing inventory, residing on a computer usable medium having computer readable program code means, said program comprising:

means for receiving food-related inventory preferences for each of a plurality of users at a controller for a particular storage area that monitors current food-related inventory in said particular storage area;

means for adjusting a current database of intended food-related inventory for said particular storage area at said controller according to said food-related inventory preferences; and

means for determining a selection of food-related items from among said database of intended inventory items that are absent from said particular storage area,

16 such that food-related inventory that is intended for
17 said particular storage area is managed.

1 28. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for receiving food-related inventory
4 preferences for a particular user from among said
5 plurality of users at said controller from a portable
6 computer system associated with said particular user.

1 29. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for receiving food-related inventory
4 preferences for said particular user from among said
5 plurality of users at said controller from a personal
6 storage device proffered by said particular user at said
7 controller.

1 30. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for receiving food-related inventory
4 preferences for said particular user from among said
5 plurality of users at said controller via a particular
6 universally accessible server system according to a
7 particular universal identifier associated with said
8 particular user.

1 31. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for receiving food-related inventory

4 preferences in an extensible mark-up language data
5 format.

1 32. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for periodically receiving records of
4 additions and removals of food-related items from said
5 particular storage area at said controller.

1 33. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for adding said food-related inventory
4 preferences to a base list of amounts of food-related
5 items intended to be maintained in inventory of said
6 particular storage area.

1 34. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for adding said food-related inventory
4 preferences to previously received food-related inventory
5 preferences for amounts of food-related items intended to
6 be maintained in inventory of said particular storage
7 area.

1 35. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for adjusting amounts of food-related items
4 included in said database of intended food-related
5 inventory according to additions and removal of food-
6 related items detected from said particular storage area.

1 36. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for transmitting said selection of food-
4 related items that are absent from said particular
5 storage area to a market.

1 37. The program for managing inventory according to
2 claim 27, said program further comprising:

3 means for receiving a request from at particular
4 store for said selection of food-related items that are
5 absent from said particular storage area at a universally
6 accessible server system according to a particular
7 universal identifier associated with said particular
8 storage area;

9 means for only allowing access to said selection of
10 food-related items if said particular store is included
11 in a plurality of allowable requesters for said
12 particular storage area.

1 38. A method for managing inventory by a portable
2 computer system, said method comprising the steps of:

3 receiving food-related inventory preferences for a
4 each of a plurality of users at a portable computer
5 system that monitors current food-related inventory in a
6 particular storage area;

7 adjusting a current database of intended food-
8 related inventory for said particular storage area at

9 said portable computer system according to said food-
10 related inventory preferences; and

11 determining a selection of food-related items from
12 among said database of intended inventory items that are
13 absent from said particular storage area, such that food-
14 related inventory that is intended for said particular
15 storage area is managed by said portable computer system.

1 39. A system for managing inventory by a portable
2 computer system, said system comprising:

3 means for receiving food-related inventory
4 preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a
5 portable computer system that monitors current food-
6 related inventory in a particular storage area;

7 means for adjusting a current database of intended
8 food-related inventory for said particular storage area
9 at said portable computer system according to said food-
10 related inventory preferences; and

11 means for determining a selection of food-related
12 items from among said database of intended inventory
13 items that are absent from said particular storage area,
14 such that food-related inventory that is intended for
15 said particular storage area is managed by said portable
16 computer system.

1 40. A program for managing inventory by a portable
2 computer system, residing on a computer usable medium
3 having computer readable program code means, said program
4 comprising:

5 means for receiving food-related inventory
6 preferences for a each of a plurality of users at a
7 portable computer system that monitors current food-
8 related inventory in a particular storage area;

9 means for adjusting a current database of intended
10 food-related inventory for said particular storage area
11 at said portable computer system according to said food-
12 related inventory preferences; and

13 means for determining a selection of food-related
14 items from among said database of intended inventory
15 items that are absent from said particular storage area,
16 such that food-related inventory that is intended for
17 said particular storage area is managed by said portable
18 computer system.

19 41. A method for managing inventory, said method
20 comprising the steps of:

21 receiving records of additions and removals of food-
22 related inventory in a particular storage area at a
23 controller for said particular storage area;

24 adjusting a current database of intended food-
25 related inventory for said particular storage area at
26 said controller according to said records of additions
27 and removals; and

28 determining a selection of food-related items from
29 among said database of intended inventory items that are
30 absent from said particular storage area, such that food-
31 related inventory that is intended for said particular
32 storage area is managed.

1 42. A system for managing inventory, said system
2 comprising:

3 means for receiving records of additions and
4 removals of food-related inventory in a particular
5 storage area at a controller for said particular storage
6 area;

7 means for adjusting a current database of intended
8 food-related inventory for said particular storage area
9 at said controller according to said records of additions
10 and removals; and

11 means for determining a selection of food-related
12 items from among said database of intended inventory
13 items that are absent from said particular storage area,
14 such that food-related inventory that is intended for
15 said particular storage area is managed.

3 43. A program for managing inventory, residing on a
computer usable medium having computer readable program
code means, said program comprising:

4 means for receiving records of additions and
5 removals of food-related inventory in a particular
6 storage area at a controller for said particular storage
7 area;

8 means for adjusting a current database of intended
9 food-related inventory for said particular storage area
10 at said controller according to said records of additions
11 and removals; and

12 means for determining a selection of food-related
13 items from among said database of intended inventory
14 items that are absent from said particular storage area,
15 such that food-related inventory that is intended for
16 said particular storage area is managed.

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